

YASNAYA POLYANA

PAPERWORK

Leo Tolstoy's Influence on Tamil Literature: Venkatesh Kumar.G

The strongest of all warriors are these two Time and Patience!! I waited for 38 years to feel this moment representing 80 million Tamil people living across the world!!!

It's a pride to speak about the greatest writer of all time **LEO TOLSTOY** and his Influence on Tamil Literature. The very early impressions of his translation works in Tamil can be dated to 1930's where a set of short stories by Leo Tolstoy were published as text books in Tamil for our school children. The book titled "**கதைமணிக்கோவை**" - Stories from Tolstoy includes three beautiful short stories written by Russian Writer Leo Tolstoy translated in Tamil by **Rao.Saheb K. Kothandapani Pillai B.A** who worked as deputy collector and controller of emigration, Madras.

On the 29th of October 1896 K. Kothandapani Pillai was born to kuppuswami and valliammai at a small village named Semmangudi near Tanjore district of Tamilnadu

He was a tall dark handsome personality who was often called as "black lotus" by his close aides which includes the former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who was an admirer of his nature. He was known for his honesty and sincerity at work which made him serve as the "protector of emigrants" during the Second World War at madras. He was awarded "rao sahib" for his immense contribution towards art and administration.

He began his art quest in the early 30's; his very first creation is quite unique as he started it with a Soviet touch.



Rao.Sahib.K.Kothandapani Pillai (1896-1979)

Leo Tolstoy the famous Russian Writer and philosopher has left his soul with the people through his immortal works. He has embraced the human race with his touch of humanity in all his creations.

In 1932 this mystic Scholar took in hand three masterful and legendary short stories of Leo Tolstoy and translated them into Tamil as stories with a touch of nativity in it. The book "**Kadhaimanikkovai**" Stories from Tolstoy was printed as text book for Tamil students carried 3 meaningful stories written in a way that a student from down south in a Tamilnadu village can relate to the great ideologies of Leo Tolstoy. The stories are set in an interesting way leaving the readers glued to it. It is to be noted that the book was printed as text book in 1931, 1932 and 1933 along with many text books written by great Tamil poets in which our very own national poet Mahakavi.Subramania Bharathi and Children's poet Bharathidasan names are to be mentioned. This book lifted the spirits of Tamil youngsters as it is mentioned in the foreword by the author himself.

Translated Short stories of Leo Tolstoy

1. **Two Old Men (1885)** - A trip to tirupathi
2. **How much land does a man need (1886)** Does wishes have limits?
3. **A lost Opportunity (1889)** Small spark leads to a big fire



பொருளடக்கம்

பொருள்	பக்கம்
1. திருப்பதி யாத்திரை 1
2. ஆசைக்கும் உண்டோ அளவு? 33
3. சிறு பொறியே பெருந்தி 53

Leo Tolstoy's fables rooted great moral values and ethics into the souls of young children which turned them into efficient citizens of the nation.

Leo Tolstoy mastered his art with Extreme depth and realness that his phrases and words penetrated deep into a human soul and won its love. So did these 3 short stories as I fell in love with them on my first read!

An entire generation of artists, filmmakers, scholars, writers, poets and performers has evolved reading these precious fables in our native language Tamil.

"There is no greatness where there is no simplicity, goodness and truth" War and Peace!!

Proving this "These stories were written with utmost simplicity and Elegance"

Standing here I would like to quote that the stories were written amidst these woods.

All great literature is one of two stories "A man goes on a journey or a stranger comes to town" -Two Old Men 1885.

The first short story "**Two Old Men**"(1886) emphasizes on the life of two Old friends who go on a holy trip. Both travel together with different perspective of life. One seeks god within himself and the other seeks it outside. **"Serving fellow human is the biggest service to god"** says this beautiful short story. The story's essence is humanity and the need of care and love among human beings. The 1932 adaptation in Tamil features the same content with a touch of nativity in it. A child reading this story through his school text book will inherit great thoughts and ideas. It's a pleasure to share with you all that thousands of my Tamil children who had their school education between 1930's to 1940's would have enjoyed reading this moral lesson in their own language.

My grandparents were one among those children.



(P.G.Ranganathan and R.Rajalakshmi)

“A drop of Nectar is enough to tell you the depth of sweetness”, Essence from these masterpieces has given rise to many films, tales, dramas, poems, stories and so on.

Our children cherished reading these fabulous Russian tale under yellow lamps lit in their houses and minds!!! Russian literature represented by Leo Tolstoy in early 20th century influenced many Indian kids. The author K.K Pillai has used references from the famous thirukkural written by thiruvalluvar using **Kural 151** and **Kural 158** to make it easy for the readers to connect with the moral of the story.

The second short story is "**How much land does a man need**" (1886) which portrays the life of a man who is desperate to accumulate more wealth. His lust to possess more properties ends with grabbing only 6 inch of land needed to bury him at the end. This is a hard hitting story that questions one's own consciousness. Through our life we live to accumulate more wealth and land but we fail to understand our task as a human living in this earth. **“Nothing is precious than a content heart says this beautiful fable”**. The adapted version in Tamil (1932) brings out the exact flavor of the story which makes the readers realize the consequences of greed when it sits at the Crown of your head!!!

The third short story is "**A Lost Opportunity**" (1889). It takes years to build up a good relationship but it can be destroyed in seconds and for the silliest reasons of all. In this story an un-stolen and an un-laid egg of a hen creates a rift between two neighbors. Their enmity fumes and at one point it burns the entire village. No one can nail this moral so strong except Leo Tolstoy. He explains how anger can destroy one's life in the cruelest way. The 1932 adaptation signifies the same without distracting the content of the original.

Tolstoy works have symbolized Humanity, modesty and love and has criticized disbelief, greed and anger. His short stories have kept inspiring generations. .

In this last letter to Mahatma Gandhi he states "The longer I live-especially now when I clearly feel the approach of death-the more I feel moved to express what I feel more strongly than anything else" and also hints and briefs on the principles of Christ in showing love and affection to all human being in this world. He quotes "God is with us, and God is mightier than man".

We India and the people in Tamilnadu have been influenced by his words and works which shaped our youngsters to fight for our national freedom.

Leo Tolstoy's preaching's through letters, short stories, novels; fables have structured the character and charm of young Indian men and women in forming a strong Independent and Self-Determined society!!!

Its worth to mention here there is a precious story written by Tolstoy in 1955 named "The Cutting of the Forest" which influenced me personally as it exposed the realm of human life.

I'm just a small drop in a big ocean of tolstoyans gathered here. But it's my duty to represent my people in this huge arena of scholars and historians. I'm overwhelmed with the works of such a legend who my ancestors have been influenced with. These three stories teach the simplest lessons of our life. I'm sure a self esteemed society was created during the colonial period under the influence of his creations. Later after independence a new generation rose up to adopt his works into films, novels, plays and other forms of art and creations. Many films in Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, and Malayalam were made under the influence of his works by either adapting or recreating them.

A film named "Panakkari" meaning 'Rich girl' was released in 1953 starring our honorable late chief minister Mr. M.G.Ramachandran. This film was made based on the novel "Anna Karenina". This Tamil film received huge adoration from my Tamil people.

A collection of Tolstoy letters were translated In Tamil by Mr. Rajamanickam in 1961 which explains the soul of the greatest writer in our very own Tamil Language.

It's my privilege to present this speech in front of all you beautiful people.

I never dreamt that my great grandfather Rao.Saheb K.Kothandapani Pillai's literary pursuit which I rediscovered recently would bring me here.

I would like a quote a statement here which I read on the biography named “Rao.Sahib.K.Kothandapani Pillai and his contribution to Tamil” done by a student named Selva Sekar from tamilnadu for his doctorate degree. The author K.K.Pillai states “I at times feel bad that many of my works have been stopped from being published and were stopped from reaching the people” and one example which I found on my research is that there is also another collection of short stories of Leo Tolstoy translated in Tamil by K.Kothandapani Pillai's named “KADHAIKOTTHU” which has no traces of existing. I wish I shall find it soon!!!



Rao.Sahib.K.Kothandapani Pillai

Additional note from the writers grandson *(R.Govindaswaminathan)



R.Govindaswaminathan

My maternal Grandfather Rao Saheb **K. Kothandapani Pillai** had written, Great Russian author **Leo Tolstoy's** Russian stories in Tamil in the year 1932. This Tamil book is titled as "**Kadhaimanikkovai**" which has three short stories spiced with good moral and wisdom.

My grandfather was in government service as Immigration Officer for issuing passports. Since he worked in British period, the British government honored him with an honorary title "Rao Saheb" for his tremendous service. This title was conferred on him by King George of England who ruled England at that time.

My grandfather apart from being a Government servant has tremendous love and zeal for Tamil Literature and he has written various Tamil books in Tamil literature. He was one of the reputed Tamil Scholar at that period. He was my mentor in guiding me in my education from school to college. It's his blessings and motivation brought me to greater heights in law. I'm indebted to him for my educational qualifications.

It's indeed, a great pleasure to give preface to G. Venkatesh Kumar, who translated "**Kadhaimanikkovai**" book which is in Tamil, translated into English very neatly and aptly. I wish him all success in his life and best wishes for him.

R. Govinthaswaminathan B.A.B.L

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Madras High Court

Chennai

South India

With love and gratitude I present this book "**கதைமணிக்கோவை**" - Stories from Tolstoy (Tamil) to the museum here at Yasnaya Polyana. I hope this marks a new beginning of Cultural Friendship between us. We were friends!! We are friends!! And We Will be friends forever!!!

I thank **Yasnaya Polyana** for the love they showered upon me which cannot be described in words. Thanks for the opportunity!!! **LOVE YOU....**